The policy of the Government is to phase out individual incentives because there is little evidence to suggest that individual incentives have any effect in the long run. Incentives can also distract significant resources from addressing the real problem of unmet needs. The policy of the Government is that the couple should be encouraged by persuasion to opt for contraception methods out of informed choice and also to use all resources to make the services available. In principle, individual incentives are damaging and not helpful because they distort responsibility of individual rather than individual participating in the programme on the basis of informed choice.

In order to implement the National Population Policy effectively, a series of consultation/conferences have been held with State Health and Family Welfare Secretaries, Professional Medical Association and Medical Experts, Non-Governmental Organizations, Social editors and Media Representatives, Consultative Committee of Parliament attached to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Industry and Corporate Sector and concerned Departments of Central Government.

An action plan also has been drawn up for implementation of important initiatives in the National Population Policy during August 2000-2001. This action plan takes into account the suggestions received in the Consultative Conferences held in June-July, 2000.

Genetically Engineered Food in the Country

28. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V. V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the allegations made by the greenpeace activists that genetically engineered food enter the country illegally as the ingredients of legally imported food products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any investigation is being done into such alleged violations of law; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. P. THAKUR): (a) to (b) Yes, Sir. Greenpeace have claimed that out of 6 food products sold in the country which were sent for testing to an independent laboratory abroad, genetically engineered material was detected in two of the products. Therefore it is alleged that the import and sale of these products is in violation of the Rules for handling Hazardous Micro organisms and Genetically Modified organisms, 1989, under the Environmental Protection Act, which stipulates that manufacture, Use, Import, Export and storage of these micro organisms cannot be undertaken without the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), a statutory body set up under the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(c) and (d) Information received from the Ministry of Environment and Forests indicates that the GEAC has not accorded approval for import of any genetically modified food in the country.

Molecular probes and analytical methods for detecting, Genetically Engineered ingredients in food are not available in the country. Therefore the Department of Biotechnology has been requested by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to suggest measures for building capabilities for developing probes and analytical methods and to identify institutions/laboratories which can take up this work.

New Health Policy

29. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to propose a New Health Policy;

(b) if so, whether the policy will replace the 1983 document and